

CoosCurrents

Coos Watershed Association

September 2009

Coos Bay, OR

Coos Watershed Association
P.O. Box 5860
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<http://www.cooswatershed.org>

The Coos Watershed Association is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1993 as a way for people with a wide range of interests to get together and discuss the “big picture” of the conditions in the Coos watershed. The Association also helps individual landowners decide how to manage and restore the watershed’s natural systems.

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Executive Director

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Monitoring Coordinator

Isthmus Assessment and Coffee Klatch Meeting Update

The first round of Coffee Klatch meetings in the Isthmus and Coalbank Sloughs sub-basin assessment area was successfully completed in June with a total of 74 individuals attending the three meetings. Thank you to all of the landowners and land managers who took the time to come out to these meetings. The information gathered regarding the residents’ land management objectives will be used to help prioritize possible restoration activities in the sub-basin.

One meeting participant commented that they were “surprised at all it [addressed]” while other participants would have been happy to have had a longer meeting to discuss individual concerns further. Another landowner added “I like the interest from the Watershed Association to assist this area in coordinated efforts.”

“We are glad to have such a wide range of interested landowners and turnout, especially in the more-developed sub-basins where we don’t yet have many pre-established relationships,” said Bessie Joyce, Assessment and Outreach Coordinator for the Coos Watershed Association.

The next Coffee Klatch activity for Isthmus and Coalbank Slough area landowners will take place in September of 2009, and will involve a



Bessie Joyce, Assessment and Outreach Coordinator for CoosWA, greets landowners at the Millington Fire Hall on June 11th for the first in a series of three neighborhood coffee klatch meetings that took place in June.

site tour illustrating types of restoration projects that have already been successfully implemented in other sub-basins of the Coos watershed.

With the generous assistance of 13 landowners in this sub-basin, CoosWA survey crews have completed aquatic habitat inventories and relative bank stability surveys on 6.08 miles of stream. These surveys, which began in July and will continue into October, provide base line data on the health of the stream.

You can follow the progress of the Isthmus and Coalbank Slough coffee klatches on our website at: http://www.cooswatershed.org/isthmus_coffee_klatch_2009.html

Restoration Program Highlight: In-Stream Restoration Has Multiple Goals

Battling poison oak and slippery slopes, CoosWA's uplands restoration project manager, Nick Scheidt, has been working long, dirty hours on multiple in-stream restoration projects this summer.

Marlow Creek

Phase I of a two-phase project to improve stream habitat in Marlow Creek through large wood placement has been completed. A total of 42 whole trees and 40 logs were placed at 17 sites along a 2.5-mile stretch of the Creek. Restoration at these sites has multiple goals including; sediment retention, reconnection of the stream and floodplain, and enhanced stream complexity. A grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and in-kind match from the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) funded this project.



Large wood and boulders enhance in-stream complexity that benefits fish habitat by promoting the development of gravel beds and pools. See the story on page 4 to learn about research into how historic forest management practices may still be affecting fish habitat.

Bottom Creek

With financial assistance from OWEB, Weyerhaeuser, and ODFW, CoosWA is performing large wood placement and monitoring projects in the mainstem of Bottom Creek and the North Fork of Bottom Creek for the second year in a row. Historic stream cleaning and forest management activities have resulted in a lack of in-stream habitat structures; resulting in a lack of suitable spawning and rearing habitat. The main restoration goal of large wood placement on Bottom Creek is to increase fish populations through increased in-stream fish habitat. Large wood placement will encourage pool formation, trap gravel that fish use to build spawning redds, and improve winter habitat complexity. A total of 4 miles of stream length will be treated in 2009 with approximately 340 pieces of wood creating 36 sites.

In-stream projects such as this are conducted during the in-water work period from July 1 to September 15. This is regulated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to protect important or sensitive aquatic species during vulnerable life stages including migration, spawning, and rearing.

Two Easy Ways to Donate

There are now two easy ways to make a monetary contribution to the education and outreach efforts of the Coos Watershed Association. Visit the *Friends of the Coos Watershed* webpage and click the Donate button to make a secure online contribution through PayPal, or print out a paper form and mail it in with your cash or check contribution. Please make your checks payable to "Coos Watershed Association"

Visit <http://www.cooswatershed.org/friends> to make your contribution today.

Donate

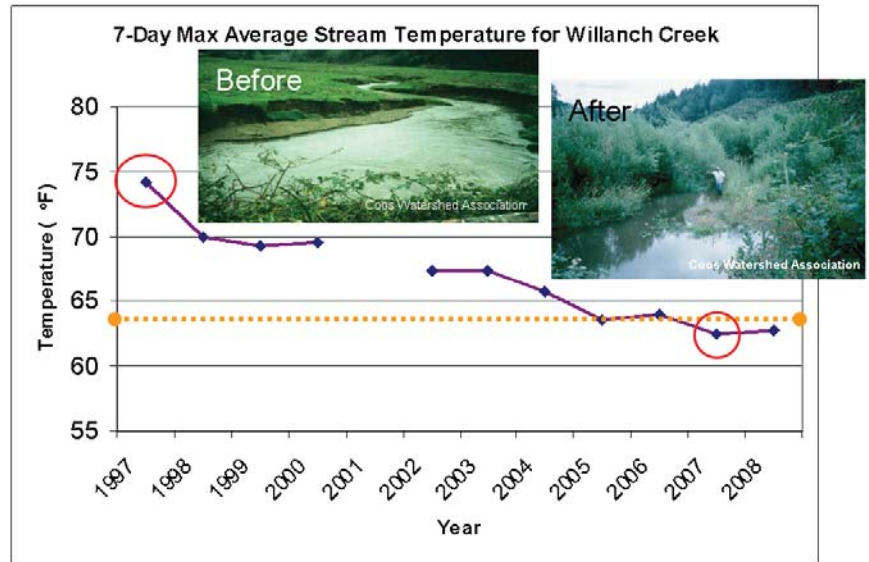
Identification of Ecological Indicators for the Coos Watershed

On Monday July 27, community members gathered at the Coos Bay Public Library to discuss the future of the Coos watershed and how to measure changes within the watershed. This was one of three presentations that Autumn Foushee presented to the local community as a way to collect community input.

Autumn, a graduate student at the University of Vermont, is interested in watershed management of aquatic resources. Her research advisors, Dr. Mary Watzin and Dr. Deane Wang, developed ecological indicators for the Lake Champlain Basin and their work has been a guiding reference for her. Many of the principles used in the development of ecological indicators can be applied across a variety of geographic and ecological scales.

Autumn joined the CoosWA and the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve for two months this summer to help establish a framework for how CoosWA and SSNERR will identify and develop ecological indicators of climate change and land use impacts on the Coos watershed. During this time, Autumn established the goals for developing ecological indicators, the criteria for the selection of indicators, and adapted an existing CoosWA prioritization process to make the selection of indicators efficient and transparent.

Ecological indicators are a way to measure the impact of restoration efforts and are being used increasingly to form management decisions in Oregon (i.e. the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds). Mary Watzin describes ecological indicators as “any measure that provides information about the condition of the ecosystem or the effectiveness of management decisions.”



Stream temperature is a very important indicator of watershed health. Since stream temperature measurements began in Willanch Creek in 1997, a greater than 10-degree drop in maximum temperatures have been recorded due in part to restoration of riparian vegetation.

How will changing climate affect watershed conditions? A University of Washington study shows increasing average air temperatures over the Northwest region over the next few decades. How will this effect ecosystems on the watershed-scale? Autumn’s work will recommend a suite of ecological indicators for the Coos watershed that could be used to track the possible impacts of projected changes.

Based on her research so far, Autumn has selected four criteria for the selection of ecological indicators for the Coos watershed. The ecological indicators must be socially relevant to public values, compatible with indicators already being used in the region and state, measurable over time, and provide meaningful interpretation.

A final document detailing the specific stages of the ecological indicators process will include an analysis of stream temperature and stream flow data, sediment data, and eel grass distribution research. It will also include a proposal for how to conduct the process of assessing community concerns.

Autumn Foushee contributed greatly to this article. After she has completed her master’s degree, Autumn would like to work with rural communities to help them manage their aquatic resources at the watershed scale.

CoosWA Helping Young Scientists

The Coos Watershed Association was proud to be able to assist three graduate students in their master's research this summer. Besides hosting Autumn Foushee's research on ecological indicators (see page 3), CoosWA was also visited by Jochen Steindel of the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna, Austria and Rebecca "Becky" Miller of the Department of Fisheries & Wildlife at Oregon State University.

Jochen, who is studying Landscape Architecture and Landscape Planning, joined CoosWA's AHI survey crew on Willanch Creek to learn methods of inventorying aquatic habitat, shade, and relative bank stability. Jochen will then perform a comparative analysis of the physical habitat inventory methods used in the US and the methods used in Austria related to the European Water Framework Directive on several rivers in Austria.

Rebecca is mapping splash dams and analyzing whether fish and habitat characteristics of streams that were splash dammed are still being affected. Anecdotal information suggests that splash damming does have lasting effects. However, few studies have ever evaluated the claim, and none of these studies were in Oregon. As part of her challenge to find evidence of splash dams in Oregon, Rebecca visited the Coos Watershed Association in June. With the help of Jon Souder, she was able to confirm two splash dam sites on the East Fork Millicoma River. Rebecca's research will provide a context for interpreting monitoring results and help in prioritizing types and locations of stream restoration projects. If you would like to share any information on historical splash dam locations, please contact Rebecca at Rebecca.Miller@oregonstate.edu.



Jochen's studies focus on nature conservation, floodplain ecology, and river basin management. This photo was taken in the Alps during a field trip to sample macrozoobenthos.



Rebecca is searching for evidence of splash dams in Oregon. Here she is with a piece of metal rebar, evidence of a splash dam on Camp Creek in the Umpqua Basin.

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CoosWA On the
Web Today!**

If you would like to receive this newsletter through e-mail; you can subscribe to this quarterly newsletter for yourself at http://www.cooswatershed.org/enews_subscribe.html.

Board Room Update: Retirement Plan Passed and Sub-Committees Meet

The Coos Watershed Association Board of Directors has had a successful summer of meetings. The Board passed a retirement plan for CoosWA staff with an employer match program that will allow employees to invest in their future and offer an incentive for employees to work for the Association longer.

Several sub-committees met over the summer as well. Due to the hard work of CoosWA's project managers, Tyler Pedersen and Nick Scheidt, the Projects Subcommittee met in May with six committee members present. They discussed the progress of lowland restoration projects such as willow wall construction and knotweed control, and headwaters projects such as sediment control and culvert upgrade projects. The committee has decided to meet three times a year to discuss projects and provide feedback.

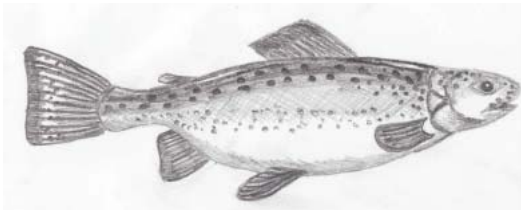
The Research and Outreach Subcommittee met in June and discussed the potential appropriateness and uses of a new technology used for increasing salmon populations through a process of wild salmon egg (artificial) fertilization, incubation and eyed-egg placement into local stream gravel. Part of CoosWA's mission is to study new technologies. Board members are looking into the feasibility of this project.

Four board members and one landowner participated in a projects tour in August to view several restoration projects including riparian buffer restoration along the Millicoma River and large wood placement and habitat improvements along Marlow Creek (see story on page 2).

Saturday September 26

Free showing of the PBS Frontline documentary "Poisoned Waters" as part of National Estuaries Day

Screenings at South Slough NERR at 10 am and 1 pm



Wednesday September 30

Then join South Slough and CoosWA for a follow-up discussion 7-9 pm at Java Jones in Empire

<http://www.cooswatershed.org/events>

Want to Work for the Coos Watershed Association and Serve America?



NORTHWEST SERVICE ACADEMY

Coos Watershed



Association



CoosWA is recruiting for an AmeriCorps member to serve as Watershed Outreach Organizer in 2010.

More information:

<http://www.cooswatershed.org/employment>

<http://www.americorps.gov>

<http://www.mtadamscenter.org/>

Event Round-up: Clamboree Booth? Matson Creek Birding Field Trip?

If you haven't been to any of CoosWA's events this Summer, here's what you have missed:

Outreach efforts continued in June with an introduction to the watershed presentation to an eager group at the Sunrise Rotary Club.

The first round of coffee klatch meetings in the Isthmus and Coalbank Slough sub-basin area in June were very successful with 74 participants (see cover story).

CoosWA had a popular booth at the Concerned Citizens of Empire's Clamboree. The booth featured a native vs. invasive plant display and new information on clams and water quality.

A large group of birders from the Cape Arago Audubon Society joined CoosWA staff on the Matson Creek Wetland Preserve in July and identified 29 bird species, 7 of which are wetland-dependent species.

CoosWA also had a booth in the new natural resources tent of the Coos County Fair. Children who visited the booth made salmon and beaver puppets and area residents were asked to fill out an invasive weed census.

If you think that sounds cool, make sure you get on our website: <http://www.cooswatershed.org/events> so that you don't miss the next great event.



Cape Arago Audubon Society members identified 29 bird species on the Matson Creek Wetland Preserve in July.

Mark your calendars: Upcoming Events

September 8: Public board meeting

September 18: World Water Monitoring Day: <http://www.wvmd.org>

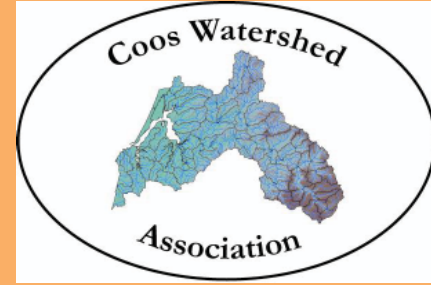
September 19: SOLV Fall Beach Cleanup - Bastendorff Beach at 10 am

September 26: National Estuaries Day - Video "Poisoned Waters" - South Slough NERR at 10 am & 1 pm

September 30: Green Night: follow-up discussion about "Poisoned Waters" - Java Jones at 7-9 pm

October 13: Public board meeting

November 10: Public board meeting



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Jason Richardson
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Dennis Turowski
Federal Land Managers

Friends of the Coos Watershed Update

Your involvement in the Coos Watershed Association does not need to end with a monetary donation. Be sure to check out our events page and volunteer page for any upcoming events and volunteer opportunities.

We would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for recently joining or renewing their *Friends* membership; Jay & Linda Farr, Barbara Butler & Hanspeter Zweifel, Cedar Electric & Construction, Inc., and Menasha Log Co.

Thanks for your continued support of local action for watershed education and restoration!